

on this reality, such consideration was certainly appropriate in this instance.

Nevertheless, our request was denied. In his letter to Florida's Governor, Undersecretary for Preparedness and Response Michael Brown's denial noted that the extent of the damage in Palm Beach County was "not of the severity and magnitude" to warrant a disaster declaration. This was a response that I found to be quite troubling.

There is no difference between a home that is destroyed during a disaster when less than 100 homes are affected and a home that is destroyed during a disaster when 1,000 homes are affected. To a family who loses its home because it happens to be located in the wrong place at the wrong time, their life comes to a screeching halt by no fault of their own.

The Small Disaster Assistance Act amends the major disaster assistance title of the Stafford Act to provide assistance for disasters where 100 or fewer homes receive major damage to or are destroyed during a natural disaster. My bill requires the President to give special consideration to areas that are historically and economically disadvantaged, have a median family income below the national, state, or local average, high unemployment, a large population of uninsured homeowners or renters, and a large elderly population.

The bill places a limitation of relief at \$1 million for disasters where less than 50 homes qualify for assistance, and \$2 million for disasters where between 51 and 100 homes qualify for assistance. These numbers were generated from the national averages of disasters where 100 or less homes qualify for assistance.

This level of authorization will cover the clear majority of small disasters. In instances where more assistance is needed, the bill gives the President the authority to exceed the limitation if (A) continued disaster assistance is needed, (B) there is a continuing risk to public safety, or (C) necessary assistance will not otherwise be provided on a timely basis.

When mechanisms do not exist in our public policy to help those in need, then it's time for us to change our laws. Failing to provide the President with the ability to authorize assistance to smaller disasters is just plain irresponsible. My legislation provides such authority. I ask that it be brought swiftly to the floor for consideration, and I urge my colleagues to support my efforts.

PERSONNEL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, had I been present for the following: Rollcall vote 213, on Ordering the Previous Question, in providing for the consideration of the joint resolution H.J. Res. 83; Rollcall vote 214, on Agreeing to the Resolution in providing for consideration of the joint resolution H.J. Res. 83; Rollcall vote 215, on Ordering the Previous Question, in providing for the consideration of H.R. 444; Rollcall vote 216, on Agreeing to the Pryce (OH) Amendment to H.R. 444; Rollcall vote 217, on Agreeing to the Resolution providing for consideration of the

bill H.R. 444; I would have voted "nay" on each measure. I ask unanimous consent that my statement be included in the RECORD immediately following the votes.

FALLEN HEROES

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVE WELDON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the life and service of Michael R. Creighton Weldon, a Private with the United States Army, who lost his life as a result of a suicide bombing attack near the city of Najaf in Iraq on March 27, 2004.

Weldon had just completed his first year of uniformed service to his country. He was a member of 3rd Infantry Division assigned to Company A and had been in country since January, 2004. He was one of four soldiers killed in the terrorist attack. He gave his life defending and protecting the United States from terrorism and bringing freedom and democracy to the people of Iraq who have only known tyranny.

Private Weldon choose to follow in the footsteps of another American hero, his mother, Jean Weldon who is a retired Army Sergeant Major.

This 20-year-old soldier was striving to be the best soldier he could be. In his sacrifice of service to his country, he succeeded in bringing honor to his family, his unit and his nation.

President Lincoln once wrote that as a nation we should "... have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty." Michael dared to do his duty and in so doing he gave the ultimate sacrifice for our continued freedom. We owe him a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid.

A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING R.C. DELA CRUZ

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker:

Whereas, R.C. Dela Cruz has completed his education at St. Clairsville High School in the class of 2004; and

Whereas, R.C. Dela Cruz was a National Honor Society member and a National Honor Roll Member. His hard work and dedication earned him the St. Clairsville Chamber of Commerce 4.0 Award, the Ohio Valley Athletic Academic Award, and recognition in the National Society of High School Scholars; and

Whereas, R.C. Dela Cruz was a member of the baseball, football, and swim teams. As the co-captain of the football team R.C. earned the Most Valuable Player award, the East Ohio District Football Special Mention, and the Times Leader Athlete of the Week Honorable Mention for both his offensive and defensive positions; and

Whereas, R.C. Dela Cruz is to be commended for the dedication and excellence he displayed while attending St. Clairsville High School; and

Whereas, R.C. Dela Cruz has demonstrated a commitment to meet challenges with enthusiasm and confidence;

Therefore, I join with the family and friends of R.C., and the entire 18th Congressional District of Ohio in congratulating R.C. Dela Cruz, graduate of St. Clairsville High School class of 2004, for his outstanding performance in school. We wish you the best of luck in all your pursuits.

FALLEN HEROS

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, on Memorial Day, America honors those who gave their lives to keep this country free and bring the world peace by defending the helpless, promoting democracy throughout the world and protecting the freedoms and liberties we enjoy as Americans. Those who defend this country, after all, are men and women from every town and every walk of life.

These honored dead have not died in vain, as Abraham Lincoln solemnly pledged during the most divisive war this Nation had yet faced. We have a long, proud history of service and sacrifice given by those men and women who quit the safety of everyday life and friends "to hazard all in freedom's fight." Today, we have such men and women deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere around the world, and we hold them and their families in our thoughts and prayers.

The oath to defend the Constitution has been sworn by every soldier, sailor, flyer, and Marine, living and dead. On Memorial Day, we recall those who gave everything to preserve the security and liberty of those they loved and those they never knew. I would hope this day is only one of many on which the living remember and salute those who served our Nation in uniform and now lie at eternal rest.

We have honored their graves and their lives since the end of our own Civil War. In 1866, spontaneous rites of remembrance were held in Carbondale, Illinois, in Columbus, Mississippi, and Waterloo, New York. The families of the men killed in that war came together to place flowers by their gravestones. The veterans joined this practice, honoring their fallen comrades with their own recollections of courage and devotion on battlefields. Ever since then, veterans and their families have led the observance of Memorial Day.

On this day, it is a time for us to remember our family members, our loved ones, our neighbors, and our friends who have given the ultimate sacrifice by visiting the cemeteries where they lie beneath small flags of red, white, and blue. It is also a time to renew our promise to the widows, widowers, and orphans of those lost in war. And it is time to renew our fight for our veterans because those still living deserve the benefits that have been promised to them by a grateful nation.

On Memorial Day 2004, as our young men and women are fighting overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan, our country dedicates a World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., finally paying tribute to those who fought over a half century ago. In fact, the 60th Anniversary of